

Final Report of the American Indian
Educational Opportunities Program at Hampton University
NASA Grant No. NGT-1-52207
Principal Investigator: Paulette F. Molin
For the Period January 1, 1999 through December 31, 1999

Introduction: The American Indian Educational Opportunities Program (AIEOP) at Hampton University was funded to provide scholarship and other support to eligible students from state and federally recognized tribal groups on campus. During the reporting period, AIEOP worked to enhance American Indian participation at Hampton through a variety of means, including recruitment and retention of students, outreach activities, curatorial efforts, course instruction, and sponsorship of educational programs. Dr. Paulette F. Molin, a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe, served as the program's director.

Enrollment Data: During the reporting period, 14 American Indian students were enrolled at Hampton University through AIEOP. The majority of these students represented state recognized tribal groups from the region, including Mattaponi, Pamunkey and Rappahannock from Virginia; Meherrin from North Carolina, Shinnecock from New York; Nanticoke-Lenni Lenape from New Jersey, and Cherokee from Alabama. In addition, four students represented members of federally recognized tribal groups (Lakota 1, Laguna Pueblo 1, and Ojibway 2). Another student, also a member of a federally recognized tribe, participated in an independent study course taught by Dr. Molin.

Of the participating students, the majority (11) pursued baccalaureate degrees while the remainder pursued master's degrees. Two new students began studies during Fall semester 1999, joining returning students. At Commencement in May 1999, three undergraduate students supported through AIEOP completed their baccalaureate degrees. They join several other AIEOP-supported graduates as alumni of the school. In addition, a graduate student (Pamunkey) completed his master's degree in August 1999. This student has served as a Langley Aerospace Research Summer Scholar (LARSS) and is part of the award-winning Project Connect team at the NASA Langley Research Center. Another undergraduate (Mattaponi) completed her baccalaureate degree in business management in the College of Continuing Education in October 1999 and is currently planning to pursue a graduate degree. These students represent a total of five AIEOP students graduating from Hampton University in 1999.

In addition to the 1999 graduates, two American Indian students are scheduled to complete their degree programs in spring 2000. One of this is a graduate student in counseling from Virginia (Rappahannock) and the other (Cherokee) is scheduled to complete a baccalaureate degree in marketing. It is expected that three other students will complete their degrees by summer and fall 2000; one of them a graduate degree in biology/environmental science, and the other two baccalaureate degrees (one in computer science and one in nursing). Besides these participants, Dr. Molin taught a Navajo

student from Montana's Salish Kootenai Tribal College, a course in federal Indian policy. This student also served as an intern in an atmospheric sciences program at Hampton University. Furthermore, the AIEOP continued to serve as an American Indian resource to numerous students, teachers, and other participants.

Outcomes: During this reporting period, Dr. Molin served as co-curator of the exhibition, *Enduring Legacy: Native Peoples, Native Arts at Hampton*. This permanent museum gallery features Hampton's historic American Indian education program that flourished between 1878 and 1923. The exhibit also incorporates contemporary art objects, illustrating the continuity and vitality of tribal cultures. Over 500 people attended the public opening on March 28, 1999, including several descendents of early students at the school. The opening event for members of the Hampton University Museum was also very well attended. AIEOP students participated in multiple ways, including assisting with visitors and/or participating in a dance demonstration. This gallery will have a long-range impact into the new millennium, informing countless students, teachers, and the broader public about Hampton's early American Indian students and the historic program in which they participated.

An earlier exhibition, *Nourishing Hearts, Creative Hands: Contemporary Art by Native American Women*, held in the Hampton University Museum from October 23 through December 6, 1998, also attracted numerous visitors to the campus. The AIEOP held Native American heritage month events in connection with this exhibit, one of which included participants from NASA Langley Research Center. In November 1999, the AIEOP also contributed to a Native American Heritage Month event centered around speaker Wilbur Pleets (Lakota, Standing Rock), a descendent of several early students at Hampton. These endeavors contributed to a cultural environment supportive of American Indians, thus enhancing recruitment and retention efforts.

Another significant effort during the project period was the Langley Research Center/Hampton University Tribal Colleges Opportunities Conference that was held at the Langley Research Center and on the campus from July 14 through 17, 1999. Spearheaded by Rafaela Schwan, Coordinator of the LARSS Program, the event attracted representatives from a range of tribal colleges and universities across the country. The Hampton University segment of the visit was hosted by AIEOP and included a tour of the permanent American Indian gallery and campus, an overview of educational opportunities, and panel discussions involving both faculty and students.

Other outcomes of the project included efforts associated with the student chapter of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES). Two students from the chapter were awarded travel grants from Lucent Technologies to attend the National AISES Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota in November 1999. One of the students is pursuing a baccalaureate degree in computer science and works part-time for the *International Review of African-American Art* in the Museum. The Hampton University student chapter of AISES, the first in the state of Virginia and the first at a historically black university, also assisted in outreach activities during this period. The chapter had exhibit booths and fundraising activities at the Nansemond Pow-wow in Virginia Beach, a

pow-wow in Norfolk, and other area events. In addition, individual students assisted with outreach efforts through their participation in conferences and related endeavors. Dr. Molin, who served as the student chapter's faculty adviser, also contributed to several publications, including co-authorship of *American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children*, 2nd edition (Scarecrow Press, 1999).

Partnerships: Throughout the project AIEOP sought to foster collaborative efforts with other schools and agencies to combat the under-representation of American Indians in training and employment, including fields critical to NASA's mission. The AIEOP continued to collaborate with NASA Langley Research Center personnel to enhance the participation of American Indians. Besides assisting with the Langley Research Center/Hampton University Tribal Colleges Opportunities Conference and fostering the recruitment of a tribal college student into an atmospheric sciences placement at Hampton University, the AIEOP continued to refer American Indians for potential involvement in NASA endeavors.

Issues and Concerns: Critical issues include the need for long-range support to recruit and retain American Indian faculty, staff and students in the effort to enhance their critically needed representation in training and employment opportunities.